

## Foreign Affairs

### Ours

is a land of good, decent, hardworking, and compassionate people - a nation founded on the revolutionary ideas that the people are the source of government, that government should serve all the people, that certain unalienable rights are not to be encroached upon by that government or even by the majority. We are a nation that has given so much to the world and sacrificed so much for the world. When we live up to our highest aspirations, when our actions match our better values and our deeper virtues, when our leadership in government calls forth those values and embodies them in deed not just in rhetoric, then, I truly believe there is no greater nation in the world.

In our dealings with foreign nations we should stand for our own highest ideals. We must defend constitutional democratic principles and human rights, but we must take great care not to side with tyrants for domestic convenience or short-term economic interests. We must also use great care not to become enmeshed in foreign lands or conflicts without clearly defined reasons and realistic strategies for success in both the short- and the long-term. Precisely because we wield such great power, we bear an even greater responsibility to use that power only when absolutely necessary.

As the richest, most powerful nation on earth and the leader of the free world, America has a responsibility to participate in international institutions to promote peace and prosperity internationally. We must work to restore our international standing, rebuild alliances by showing respect for our allies, and demonstrate through actions, not just words, that we are again prepared to stand as an example of freedom, human rights, compassion, and the true strength of principle.

### Foreign Aid

In pure dollar terms, the United States government gives more in international aid than almost any other nation. However, as a percentage of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP), our nation's foreign assistance trails many other industrialized countries. Annually, excluding expenditures in Iraq, our government contributes less than one percent of the federal budget to assist the people of foreign countries.

Congressman Baird knows the United States cannot indefinitely sustain the developing world, but he strongly believes that foreign aid, if well targeted and monitored, is both a moral responsibility and an intelligent economic investment. Stable, democratic, economically prosperous countries throughout the world further the security and economic prosperity of all nations, including the United States. He has repeatedly joined requests for increased foreign aid budgets.

Globally, more than one billion people live on just \$1 per day. Congressman Baird is a supporter of the Global Poverty Act. This legislation would establish a comprehensive plan for the United States to battle poverty around the world.

#### Israel and the Palestinian Authority

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is tremendously complicated and difficult to comprehend, let alone resolve, from our perspective and position. There are grievances, losses, suffering, hatred, hopes, and conflicting beliefs on many sides. There are also courageous, decent, brilliant, creative, and loving people on all sides. Having personally traveled throughout the Middle East, including to Israel, Egypt, and Jordan, Congressman Baird remains hopeful a permanent peace will be realized.

Regarding U.S. aid, Congressman Baird supports continued aid to both Israel and the Palestinian people, with a particular focus on humanitarian aid. This does not, by any means, imply that Congressman Baird supports every policy or action of either government. Nor does it imply that our nation does not have the right, and indeed the responsibility to, in some manner relate our aid to certain policy or strategic principles. Ultimately, both sides must commit to significant changes and a shared commitment to non-violence and justice before peace can be achieved.

#### Jordan

In July of 2007, Congressman Baird introduced a resolution commending the people and the government of Jordan for their continued commitment to holding elections and broadening political purposes. Congressman Baird believes that Jordan is a valuable ally of the United States, and should be recognized for the steps that it has taken toward opening up its political process. The resolution passed the House on September 5, 2007.

## Sudan

Congressman Baird is deeply distressed by the humanitarian crisis plaguing the Sudan and has called for a Special Envoy to focus on the situation full time. According to the U.N., three million civilians, in a nation of only 38 million, currently risk starvation. Indeed, the Sudanese government has sought to utilize starvation as a means of ethnic cleansing.

Congressman Baird supported the Comprehensive Peace in Sudan Act, which applied targeted sanctions to support peace efforts in Darfur and provides humanitarian relief to the civilian Sudanese people. Congressman Baird has also joined an effort to ask the Chinese government to take a larger role in ending the violence in Sudan. As a major investor in Sudan's energy sector, China could potentially create positive change in the region.

## Cuba

The U.S. has maintained an embargo, intended to topple the Castro government, against Cuba since 1960. Congressman Baird strongly believes we must continue to urge the Castro regime to improve its human rights record and move towards free and fair elections. At the same time, however, four decades of embargo has been a sufficient period of time to test its effectiveness; the U.S. is now the only industrialized nation that maintains a Cuban embargo. The continuation of the embargo harms not the Cuban government, but the Cuban people. As was the case with our opening of diplomatic relations with China, the sharing of ideas and the promotion of commerce between two nations can lead to a stronger, more productive relationship. In support of this effort, Congressman Baird has backed the Export Freedom to Cuba Act. The legislation would open up travel between the United States and Cuba.

## Colombia

The civil war that has consumed Colombia for 30 years is extraordinarily complex. The Colombian military, the right wing paramilitaries, and the left-wing guerillas have all accepted monies from the drug cartels and committed human rights violations. Congressman Baird believes the United States must work with all parties to negotiate a peaceful settlement, protect human rights, and strengthen democratic institutions in Colombia.

Plan Columbia Assistance Act, legislation authorizing the initial installments of targeted U.S. economic and military assistance to Colombia. He also voted to transfer \$30 million appropriated for Colombian military operations to Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Fund and \$75 million for Colombia military operations to the Child Survival and Health Programs Fund

to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and other infectious diseases throughout the world. Finally, Congressman Baird strongly opposes the Administration's efforts to expand U.S. involvement in Colombia beyond counter-narcotics operations. Congressman Baird fears expanding U.S. involvement in Colombia to military operations will unnecessarily entangle the United States in a bloody and prolonged civil war.

## United Nations

According to the United Nations charter, a document which the United States helped draft, the United Nations is dedicated to the principles of promoting international peace and respect for human rights. Congressman Baird supports such principles, and believes the U.N. plays an important role in mediating international conflicts and supporting democratization efforts. However, Congressman Baird believes the U.S. must be diligent not to cede U.S. authority or sovereignty to any international body, including the United Nations.

## Iran

Congressman Baird is very concerned about the United States becoming engaged in a military conflict with Iran. He believes that military action should always be a last resort. In addition, due to the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, he believes our military is already stretched dangerously thin. He believes that engaging in additional military missions would deplete our resources further and put our soldiers at risk. That is why he is a cosponsor of a resolution which affirms that no prior statutes that have been passed by Congress, including the 2002 resolution authorizing the President to use military force against Iraq, grant the President the authority to use force against Iran.

At the same time, Congressman Baird is gravely concerned by Iran's effort to develop nuclear weapons and recognizes the need to keep Iran from obtaining weapons of mass destruction. Allowing Iran to acquire a nuclear arsenal will further destabilize the Middle East and directly threaten the United States. In addition, many of the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's statements give serious cause for concern. He has denied the existence of the Holocaust, threatened the "wipe Israel off the map," and has also threatened the United States with "harm and pain." This troubling track record demonstrates the danger of allowing Iran to possess nuclear weapons. Congressman Baird believes that we must take a strong stand against any country that develops nuclear weapons while threatening other nations and shunning the international community. As always, it is his sincere hope that diplomacy will prevail in this situation.

## Iraq

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